

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

For Release October 11, 1970

Walker 343-2463

NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Mercury Under Study

The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife is studying effects of mercury on the Great Lakes aquatic environment. Topics of interest in the project: Distribution and cycling in the water, toxicity to fish, and uptake and loss in fish. The heavy metal has been found as a contaminant of fish and wildlife over a broad area.

Computerized Wildlife

Following other scientists who use computers to ease their workload, biologists of the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife have applied automatic data processing methods to pesticide evaluation, fish hatchery production, flyway habitat management, and other programs.

In handling of bird banding data, over a million bits of information about game and nongame birds are sent yearly to the Bureau's Bird Banding Laboratory at Laurel, Md. Previously analysis of the data took months. Now, with a computer, only several hours are required to determine meaningful migration patterns, population trends and other information needed in establishing Federal hunting regulations.

Testing Stamina

A see-through plexiglass tunnel is being used in the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife fish hatcheries to test stamina of fish, and help determine their ability to survive in the wild after planting. The "stamina tunnel" carries a stream of water of controllable velocity; the staying power of a fish is determined by seeing whether it can maintain its position against the flow.

A Better View at Okefenokee

Up to now visitors to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge of the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife had to boat considerable distances to see the interior features of this remnant of America's wild past in southern Georgia. Those not able to take the boat trip left with less understanding of swamp values.

This fall the situation will be remedied by a five-mile wildlife drive, a three-quarter-mile boardwalk, and a 30-foot observation tower deep in the swamp. Thus visitors can view cypress and Spanish moss, burned out peat bog lakes, floating masses of unusual vegetation known as "houses," watery channels, islands, 'gators, and herons.

x x x